

DUALA FABLES

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I. THE MAN AND HIS WIFE.

A MAN lived with his wife in a village. They begot four children, but all these died. Therefore the man said to his wife: "My wife, come, let us build our house in the wood, because the village does not mean well for us."

They entered the midst of the wood and settled there. The woman became pregnant again. Before she was confined her husband said: "Oh, woe! What shall I do now?" Then he said further to his wife: "Stay here; I will go into the village to fetch you some small fish. These you shall eat when you have been confined."

But before the man reached the village, the woman was confined. She began to lament: "Oh, woe! What shall I do now? My husband is not here during my pains." Then suddenly appeared an Edimo (Goblin) and said: "I have found a woman." The woman answered: "I have found a man (who can help me)."

The Edimo said to the woman: "Give me food (vegetables) and fish; I will cook for you." The woman answered: "I have neither food nor fish. My husband has gone into the village to fetch food and fish." But the Edimo said: "You are a liar. Have I not seen how your husband one day killed a pig?"

Then the Edimo took the pork and a banana, and cooked

food. When the food was ready, he said to the woman : " Would you like to eat ? " The woman answered : " Yes, I should like to eat." Then the Edimo said : " You will get the food if you give me your child." But the woman would not have this, and said to the Edimo : " Eat your food alone ! " Now the Edimo ate everything and left only some vegetables. Then he said to the woman : " This is your portion of the food." But the woman refused to partake of this food.

- But a bird sat on the tree and saw how the Edimo distressed the woman. Therefore he flew into the village. When he came to the village, he sat again on a tree. He began to call : " Mr. Krutongo, Mr. Krutongo, your wife has been confined, but the Edimo wants to take her child away."

Then Krutongo sent people to chase away the bird. It flew away, but came soon again and called once more : " Mr. Krutongo, it is true what I say. Your wife has been confined, but the Edimo wants to take her child away."

Then Krutongo went quick into the wood to the place where his wife was. When his wife saw him, she told him everything, how the Edimo distressed her. When Krutongo again went out one day, to fetch fish and food for his wife, the Edimo appeared a second time. He took some bananas and meat. He cooked these and began to eat. When Krutongo returned, his wife told him as before.

Krutongo spoke : " My wife, I will hide myself to-day (about the time) when the Edimo comes. Let him do what he likes to do. I shall shoot him then with my gun."

When Krutongo had hid himself, the Edimo appeared and persecuted the woman. He took again some bananas and meat, and cooked it. He sat down and began to eat. But then Krutongo came out with the gun and shot the Edimo. He cut off some dried banana leaves and burned with them the Edimo. Because of this no Edimo could ever again come into Krutongo's house.

They (Krutongo and his wife) lived well in their new village. They became many. Krutongo was praised by everybody. (He was a respected man.)

II. THE MAN AND THE WOMAN.

A MAN and a woman lived in the town of the Bedimo.¹ The woman was pregnant. But her husband wanted to journey into another land, to trade there. He said to his wife: "Now when I have journeyed to the other land and your hour comes, say to nobody: 'Who will assist me at my confinement?'" The woman said: "Yes!"

But when the man had travelled far away, her hour came. She asked: "Who assists me now at my confinement?" Then an Edimo (Goblin) came to her and said: "I will help you." The Edimo helped this woman too, but he gave her no food. The woman had vegetables (bananas, yams, &c.). When the Edimo had cooked, he did not allow her to eat. The Edimo did like this every day. If the woman wanted to eat, he said to her: "If you eat, I shall kill you at once." Then the woman humoured the Edimo, who continued to behave like this every day.

But on the roof stood a bird, who saw all this. The bird flew to the distant land, where the husband of this woman was. When he saw him, he sat on the roof and said: "Man, thou who hast married thy wife, thy wife has been confined, but the Edimo will not allow her to eat." The man listened to the bird's speech and said: "Perhaps my wife has been confined and is now in great distress." He loaded his boat quickly with his goods, to go to his wife and to learn how she was. When he came to the shore, he mounted² quickly to the town. But he did not find the Edimo in his house; because this one was out walking. But he found his wife at home. She told him: "An Edimo comes always here. Now he is walking about. Hide yourself under the bed,³ then you will see him."

The man hid himself under the bed. As usual, so also on this day the Edimo came to the woman. He said to the woman: "I believe there is another man in the house. I

¹ Bedimo is the plural of Edimo:—i.e., Spiritland.

² The town of Cameroons (now called Duala) lies now entirely on a bank or terrace, 30 feet high.

³ Many Duala use a simple bed like a bunk.

notice it with my nose by the smell." But the woman lied to the Edimo: "Nobody is here in the house." Now the woman cooked food. Then the Edimo said to her: "If you eat now, I shall kill you."

But when the man heard this, he came at once from under the bed. He asked the Edimo: "What are you doing here?" Then the Edimo was astonished and said: "Master of the House, you have come!"¹ But the man answered: "I do not want your greetings." He chased the Edimo away. Now his wife ate again as before.

The woman and the man went on their field to work. When they had completely finished with the weeding, they returned home to the town. But when they went back to their field, later on, they found all over the field small grass and weeds. They were astonished at this, because they had been weeding everywhere, and still there were again weeds on the field. They went to the fortune-teller in the house of the spider. The spider told them: "The Edimo, whom you have driven from your house, does this. But if you want to catch him, you must set about it thus: You make a fetish² that resembles your wife. Besmear the entire body of this fetish with tree-tar.³ If the Edimo comes now and says to the weeds: 'Weeds, stand again on the field,' and the weeds stand up again, he will see the fetish. He will stand still and take hold of it, while in hiding you watch the field. He will think that your wife watches the field. You will see what this Edimo does."

Now when the Edimo came to the field he said: "Woman, I shall beat you to-day." He approached and struck the fetish a box on the ear. But the fetish remained standing quite near the Edimo, and did not go away. Then the Edimo beat him also with the other hand. But both hands stuck fast. Now he pushed the (supposed) woman with the feet, but these stuck fast too. He knocked his forehead against that of the fetish. The two foreheads stuck fast also. When he leaned now his belly against the one of the

¹ Greeting.

² A fetish is a figure resembling a person, made with clay.

³ The sticky juice of a tree.

fetish, it also stuck fast. Then the Edimo said: "Why do you not take hold of me at once?" But the fetish stood there like a dumb person.

But now the man came out from his hiding-place and asked the Edimo: "What do you want here?" The Edimo answered him: "I wanted to play with this thing." But the man said: "I gave you no cause. You shift the blame upon this fetish. I shall kill you."

Then he killed the Edimo, and threw him in the water.

III. THE GIRLS.

SEVEN girls went to the river to catch crayfish.¹ When they came to the river they caught very many crayfish. But in this river lived a Tengu.² As now the girls went further and worked in the river, the Tengu pursued them. They ran quickly into the wood. But they had forgotten the way. As they continued, they came to the house of an old woman. The old woman said to them: "I have got children." The girls answered: "We have again got a mother." But the girls had a dog with them. The old woman asked: "Shall I give you food?" The girls answered: "Yes!"

But now, when the food came, the dog said to the girls: "You girls, eat on no account of this food!" But the girls did not listen to him, because they were very hungry. They gave also to the dog to eat, but he would have none of the old woman's food. This food had this effect, that the old woman could put out the eyes of the person who had eaten of it.

One day in the twilight the old woman gave the girls mats, that they could sleep on them. The dog laid himself also down to sleep by their side. In the night, when the girls were asleep, the old woman came. She took a small knife and began to put out the eyes of these girls. When she had finished putting out the eyes of the girls, she wanted

¹ Once in a year, during one or two days, masses of crayfish appear in the Cameroons River, to lay there their eggs. Everybody goes then to the river to catch crayfish, which are most productive. Cameroons derives its name from these crayfish. [Portuguese: *Camarões*=large prawns or crayfish.]

² A Tengu is a water-spirit.

to put out those of the dog also. But the dog said: "M—m—m—m!"

Then she left the dog. She went away now to call together the beasts. These were, together with herself, to eat the girls.

But while the old woman called together the beasts, the dog made Eyengenge.¹ When he had finished the Eyengenge, it began to lament just like the girls. But the dog took the eyes and replaced them in their sockets. Then he said to the girls: "Now we run away fast; because this woman will kill you when she returns." They came out and ran quickly away. They found also the way again and went home.

But now when the invited beasts came, they saw the girls no more. They asked: "Where are the girls?" The old woman answered: "They have run away." Then the beasts said to her: "Why have you deceived us? We will eat *you* now."

The old woman went into the hut. She cut from herself one arm and gave it to the beasts. But when these had eaten the arm, they said they wanted more food. Then the woman cut off her leg, and gave it to the beasts. But the beasts said: "We want more food." Now the woman cut her breasts off and gave those to them. But the beasts were not content yet, and wanted more. Then she gave them both ears. When this was not enough yet for the beasts, she cut off her nose, which she gave also to the beasts. But the beasts said: "We are not contented with the little things. We want to have you entirely." Upon this they killed the woman and ate her up completely.

IV. THE WOMAN AND THE MAN.

In a town in the south lived an Ekelekete.² Every day he swallowed a person.

A man and a woman quarrelled one day. The woman said to her husband: "I am going back again to my father's

¹ Eyengenge is the pith of the bamboo.

² Ekelekete is an ogre that lives in the forest.

house, because you are too poor for me." The woman went. On her way she met an Ekelekete. He sat by the roadside and said to her: "Woman, where are you going?" The woman answered: "I am going to my father's house, because I should like to see my mother again." Then the Ekelekete swallowed her. When she got into the belly of the Ekelekete, she found there many people.

But the woman had a small knife by her. She took the knife and began to cut the bowels of the Ekelekete. Then the Ekelekete began to sing¹: "Tenge (name of his wife), Tenge, quick, pound me some pepper!"² Quick, pound me some pepper! I have killed and swallowed many people. My bowels are splitting. Pound quick!"

Tenge, his wife, pounded him some pepper and gave it to him to eat. But the swallowed woman cut all his bowels open. Then the Ekelekete began again to sing: "I have killed many people." Upon this he called: "Tenge, quick, pound some pepper! The people are coming out of my body again. But I will strew some pepper into their eyes."

But now the swallowed woman cut his belly quite open, so that it gaped into two parts. She and all the people, which had been in the belly, came out. But the Ekelekete died.

V. THE SORCERER.

In a town lived a powerful man who had passed already through many fights. He had only 60 soldiers, but he fought against 1,000 warriors. He won the battle. He killed them all, only one remained alive. But these 60 soldiers did not shoot with guns, they had no arms. The powerful man had a poison.

When the warriors went to fight against him, he said to

¹ The expression "to sing" (*loingo*) will sound strange. The correctness of this expression is justified by the nearer knowledge of the Duala language, which is exceedingly rich in musical tones.

² Pepper (cardamoms) is the only medicine of the Duala, and of most of the other negro tribes, which is used against diarrhoea and stomach-ache. Besides this medicine the negroes of West Africa possess generally only a purgative. This last is decocted from some kind of grass. It is used against most illnesses, and acts very strongly.

them : " Fight with each other ! " And then the 1,000 men fought against each other, until they killed each other.

But one remained alive in a battle. This one recounted the story to everybody and said : " This man is very powerful."

VI. THE GIRL AND THE MAN.
(THE CHILDREN AND THEIR MOTHERS.)

THE mothers came with their children to the river to bathe. The mothers bathed at a different place. They said to their children : " Bathe here ! If you hear the rustle of the dried-up banana leaves from above, remain quiet and do not run away. But if you hear this noise from the west,¹ run away at once."

The children of these women put their clothes on a stone. When they heard the noise of the dried banana leaves from upstream, they did not run away. But when the noise came from the west, they ran away quickly. Each one took its clothes, which it had put on the stone.

But a girl had forgotten her clothes on the stone. Now when this girl returned to fetch her clothes, she found by the stone a man. His legs were very long. Then the girl was very much afraid. But the man said to her : " Be not afraid, come and fetch your clothes." But when the girl approached, he seized hold of her suddenly. He took a big bag from his back and put the girl into it.

And the man travelled about everywhere with the girl in the bag. When he arrived at a place, he said to the people : " I have an idol (fetish) in my bag." When he had bought food for himself and was eating it, he put a part into the bag, so that the girl might eat also.

He travelled about like this everywhere with the girl. The people gave him food. But the father of the girl was searching everywhere for his child. At last the father came to the house in which the man lived with his child. He heard the voice of his child from the bag. Upon this he called other people and told them : " I hear my child's voice

¹ The affluents (brooks) of the Cameroons River flow, nearly without exception, from east to west. The noise from the west comes thus from down stream.

from the bag. It speaks exactly like my child." Then they bound the man who had stolen the girl, and took the child from the bag. Then they killed the man. But when they took the girl out, they were astonished at her appearance; because when the girl was stolen, she had no breasts yet, she was still a child. But when the father took her out of the bag, the breasts were fallen.¹

VII. THE MAN OF GOD AND THE TOWN OF THE THIEVES.

THE man of God came into the town of the thieves. They wanted this man of God to become a thief such as they were. But the man of God would not by any means. Now they wanted to kill this man of God. Then the man of God yielded and consented to steal with them. He stole now like the others; but he understood stealing too badly. Because of this the thieves did not like him. He prayed to God and said: "Lord, Thou who surpasses all people, if it is Thy will that I should live rightly, then let my life be at an end. But if it is Thy will that my life remains, so give me knowledge that I can do as these people do."

God decided to help him. He began now to steal like the other people. One day he went to the place where they were often stealing. He met there a man who drove before him 16 head of cattle. He said to this man: "Father, allow me to help you." The man said: "Yes!" Now he drove the cattle. But as he drove them along the owner went ahead, because he was very hungry. The man of God drove the cattle another way. He brought them into the town of the thieves. The people liked him for this very much. They shouted for joy and said: "Now we believe this man to be like a child of our town."

On another day he went out again. He met an old man on the way who carried a box of eggs. He said to him: "Give it here, I will carry it for you." The old man gave him the box of eggs too. Now when the old man got hungry he went to his house. Then the man of God turned quickly back with the box and went home another way.

¹ Developed. The child had become a woman.

When he returned to the town of the thieves, the thieves began to love him very much. They said to him: "Now you have to help us with yet one more task; then we shall not send you to steal again. We know a man whom nobody can rob, because he has many watchmen. Go there and steal the mat on which he sleeps!"

The man of God said: "Yes, I will go there." When he got there he set on fire another house. The watchmen heard of it, and ran to see to the fire. When all the watchmen had gone the master of the house came out too to see to the fire.

The man who had set the house on fire then went into the abandoned house of the rich man and stole his sleeping-mat. Then he brought it into the town of the thieves.

The thieves said to him: "Now you shall not steal any more, because you surpass us all. The cunning and tricks of thieving are in you. A man shall now be your servant, and we will pay you every month a sum."

[This fable must have arisen at a time when the Christian Missionaries (English Baptists) were already active in the Cameroons, that is to say, during the last 50 years. The white man passes in the eyes of the Duala generally as wise. The God of the white man is therefore the symbol of wisdom and cunning, and these qualities enjoy the highest esteem of the Duala people.]

But in many ways the white man is also considered foolish; because, according to the opinion of the Duala, he lets himself be easily cheated. The white men endeavour most of them to collect curiosities, arms, &c., and sacrifice much money for these things, which in the eyes of the Duala are nearly worthless. This desire for collecting is made the most of by the Duala.]

VIII. TWO WOMEN WHOM A MAN MARRIED.

Two women whom a man had married quarrelled very often. One day one of these women went to the house of an old woman, which lay behind the wood. She said to her: "My mother, I am a poor woman, Help me out of

all my sorrows." But this old woman had the small-pox. She said to the woman: "First of all stay here, till my small-pox is cured." Then the woman gave her medicine till the small-pox was cured.

One day the woman got very hungry. She said to the old woman: "I am now so very hungry." Then the old woman said to her: "Go and take cowdung and sand, and put both into a pot." The woman did exactly as the old woman had bid her do. She put the things into a pot. The cowdung became beef and the sand rice. Now they began both to eat. When they had finished their meal, the woman said to the old woman: "My mother, your small-pox is cured. I will now go home again."

The old woman answered: "Yes, I will give you the (blessing) prosperity that you wanted." She sent the woman to a place where she had put her eggs, and said to her: "When you get there, all the eggs will talk a lot. But the egg which says: 'Take me, take me!' that one do not take. But if an egg says: 'Take me not, take me not!' then take it."

The woman went there. All the eggs began to talk. One part said: "Take me!" The other part said: "Take me not!" She took an egg which said: "Take me not!" She came back to the old woman and said to her: "I took the egg which said: 'Take me not!'"

The old woman said further to her: "Take this egg and go home. When you come to your house, tell your husband to clear a space from bushes and grass. And when he has cleared it, then throw this egg on the ground. A big house will then come out of this space."

The woman got home and did exactly like this. Then a big house came out of the egg. Now the man began to love this woman very much.

But when the other woman saw this, she went to the house of the old woman too, and said to her: "I want a house from you too." The old woman answered her: "Yes, but you must wash the small-pox first, which I have on my body." But the woman did not like to do what the old woman told her. She was astonished that she should have

to do such work. She did it, but she did not wash the pustules clean. While washing them she spat continually. The old woman saw how the young woman did everything; but she kept silence. Now when the woman had finished washing the small-pox she said: "I am hungry." The old woman said to her: "Go, take cowdung and sand, and put both in a pot." The woman had to force herself very much when she put the cowdung and the sand in the pot. The cowdung disgusted her. She took banana leaves, and with these put the cowdung and the sand in the pot. The old woman did not like the way in which the woman worked, but with no look did she let her see that she was discontented.

When the food was ready, the woman would not partake of it. She said to the old woman: "I will go home now. I shall not stop here, where the hunger is killing me." The old woman said to her: "Yes, but go first to the place where my eggs are. When you get there, take the egg which says: 'Take me not, take me not!' But the egg which says: 'Take me, take me!' that one do not take on any account."

Now when the woman went to the place where the eggs were, she heard an egg that said: "Take me not, take me not!" But she listened to another egg, which said: "Take me, take me!" She took this egg, that said "Take me!" When she came after this to the old woman, she would not show her the egg. The old woman asked: "Will you not show me the egg?" The young woman did not answer her. The old woman said further: "As you did your things badly, precisely so will you be also recompensed."

Now the woman went home. When she got home she said to her husband: "I think that from now you will love me as much as that other woman; because I bring you the same things as she has brought you." After this she said further to him: "Call many people that they clear a space from bushes and grass." Now after the people had cleared a place, the woman took hold of the egg and threw it on the ground. No house came out of it, but warriors came forth from it.

When they had come out they beat the woman. Then

they shot with their guns into the village. After the shooting they returned again into the egg. But the woman threw the egg again on the ground. Then they came out again, and began again to shoot with their guns. The warriors did like this for seven days. They killed very many people.

The few people that they spared went to the house of the old woman. They said to her: "What kind of egg did you give this woman?" The old woman answered them: "This woman came into my house and was very impertinent and bold. She did not at all listen to my words. I sent her to my eggs and said to her: 'The egg which says: "Take me!" that one do not take, and the egg which says: "Take me not!" that one take.' But she took the egg which had said: 'Take me!'"

But to the people the old woman said: "Go now! When the warriors want to fight you, only say to them: 'Old woman!' They will not do anything to you then."

IX. TWO GIRLS.

Two girls had a quarrel with each other. The one girl asked the other one: "Why have you not got a man (bridegroom) yet? If I call my man now so that we may have our wedding, will you then come to the repast?"¹

But the other girl answered her: "Because God gave you the man, you need not scoff at me." Yet the first one replied: "Because you are not as good (amiable) as myself, therefore the men do not go to you. Do not say therefore that God has done this unto you. It is your own fault. Confess only the truth that you are bad (disagreeable)."

Then the second girl said: "Yes, I *am* disagreeable. That is not good." Now the quarrel was settled. The two girls became good friends. Both also married. They bore also many children. Never until their death did they quarrel again.

¹ At the wedding a feast takes place. There is much eating, and drinking of rum.

X. TWO CHILDREN AND THEIR FATHER.

Two sons asked their father that he should give them wives. But their father would not do this. Therefore these two children departed and went to the house of their cousin.

When they passed along by the sea they found great leaves that were grown together. Now when they opened these leaves, two women came out of them. They were called Ngobo and Musole. Now when they arrived with their wives at their cousin's, they lived with him a year. Then their wives became pregnant and bore them two children, called Mbwm¹ and Tue.²

The children grew. But one day the two mothers quarrelled with the wives of their husbands' cousin. The subject of the quarrel was, if the cousin's wives should bear children or not. But the cousin's wives threatened that they would kill Mbwm and Tue.

Their fathers heard it, and told it to their cousin. Then the cousin beat those of his wives that had said this. But after the cousin had beaten these women, they took poison and with it killed the children of the two brothers.

The two brothers got very angry over it, so that they wanted to leave their cousin's house. The cousin said to them: "If you leave my house, where will you live then?"

But the brothers did not let themselves be dissuaded. They left the cousin's house. Quite at the beginning of their journey they found two slaves on the way, with the names of Penda³ and Koko.⁴ When they went further, they found also two children. The two women said: "We have found children again." The two children said to them: "We have found mothers again."

These children became very wise when they got bigger. But the two brothers became very rich. They returned home with many wives. And when their father saw this, he came and begged them that they might not be angry with him. He gave them also an ox and two women. But the two sons would not consent until their father gave them the rule

¹ Rich,² Poor.³ Wager.⁴ Obstnacy.

over his village. Now only did they accept the present from their father. With this the story is finished.

XI. THE TWO WOMEN.

(MAN AND WOMAN.)

A MAN went very far away into the wood. He went there to fish. This man had two wives. His wives stopped at home. One day they quarrelled.

A child came near and said to the women : " Why are you quarrelling ? It would be better for you to fight than to be abusing each other so much everywhere."

When the women heard this they answered the child : " Go away at once ! If you do not go we shall kill you ; because our affair does not concern you."

But this child said : " I have no cause to mix myself in your quarrel, but I beg of you : Let be : it is not nice that you should quarrel thus."

Then the two women took hold of the child and killed it. The mother of this child came and saw her child lying dead on the ground, though she thought her child was sleeping.

But a bird came flying near and said : " Woman, those two women killed your child."

When the mother heard this, she asked the two women : " Where is my child ? " But when the two women heard her asking this, they ran quickly to another foreign country and never dared to return to their own country again.¹

XII. TWO MEN.

Two men went into the wood to search for fruit. There they met an old woman who had built herself a house there. Each of the men had gathered four bunches of palmnuts. The old woman wanted these two men's palmnuts. One of the two men did not give them to her, but the other one was more generous.

When they had left their homes it was not raining. But

¹ The Duala is very fond of his country. Exile is to him the hardest punishment.

when they wanted to return home it began to rain. Now they turned back to the old woman's house. But the old woman would not permit the churlish man who had refused her any palmnuts to enter her house. On the other hand, she allowed the generous man to do so. The other one had to stop outside.

But for the good man she prepared food. She took a banana leaf and put it into a pot. When the leaf was ready it had turned into a fresh fish. Then she put earth into a pot, and it turned into pepper. Now she put stones on the hearth. They turned into firebrands.

When all these dishes were ready, she gave them to the man who had given her palmnuts. But the other one did not get anything, because he would not give her any palmnuts. Now when the good man had eaten enough, she gave him a pigeon.

The two men went home. But the man to whom the old woman had given the pigeon called all the chiefs together that they might see his pigeon. When the chiefs came, he sang a song about the pigeon: "My pigeon is good. She mounts high up, but she returns to me again."

The pigeon did as her master said. It flew up high, and came also down to him again.

Each chief gave him 4 marks, some gave also 30 marks. Then this man became very rich, because many men came to him to see the bird.

XIII. A GIRL.

A GIRL went fishing with a basket. She searched a long time and saw no fish. Then she became tired and said: "I am searching for fish, but I have not seen one yet. I am going back to the town now. But as she spoke thus and dipped the basket into the water, she caught a small fish. Its name was Dibundu.¹ Then the girl said: "God, I thank you, that in my poverty you have helped me through these words of mine."

She was very pleased and played a long time with the fish.

¹ Dibundu is a kind of stint.

But the fish struggled in her hand and escaped her. Then the girl raised loud cries and said: "God of pity! the fish that you gave me has escaped me."

Now she began to follow the fish. She came to the house of Mbuku,¹ and asked him: "Mbuku, did you not see if the Dibundu passed by here?" The Mbuku answered her: "The Dibundu has just gone by."

Then the girl went further, and came to the house of the Eyondo.² The Eyondo said to her: "I saw the Dibundu go by just now."

Then the girl continued her journey, and came to the house of the Se. She asked the Se: "Did you not see that the Dibundu passed by here?" The Se answered her: "Just now the Dibundu has gone by, and went on." When the girl continued her way, she came to the house of the shark, and asked him: "Did you not see the Dibundu go by?" The shark replied: "If you give me one of your fingers, which I like to eat, then I will tell you where the Dibundu is." Then the girl begged him and said: "Please, please, let me go!" Now the shark said to her: "Go now! I saw the Dibundu pass by, and asked him where he was going. He answered me that he was going to the house of the whale."

Now the girl started on her way and questioned none of all the fish, because the shark had told her that the Dibundu was in the house of the whale. It took a long time. Then she came to the house of the crab, whose back is as angular as the corner of a house. The crab said to the girl: "I will let you go now, but you must come to my house again when you return. You must on no account pass by my house!" The girl said to her: "Yes."

But when the girl came to the house of the whale, he gave her food to eat. After she had eaten, the whale said to her: "I sent this Dibundu to you that you might kill him. But you had pity with him, and took care of him too. When he escaped from you, you pursued him to my house."

The girl said to him: "When I went fishing with my

¹ Mbuku is a very small fish.

² Eyondo resembles the carp very much.

³ Se is a large fish.

basket, I caught no fish. But when I said : ' If I catch no fish now, I shall go back to the town,' then the fish called Dibundu came into my basket. But I was so pleased about it and began to play with him. Then he slipped out of my hand and escaped me. But I pursued him. On the way I met many fish, and asked them if they had seen the Dibundu. And they answered me all : ' I saw the Dibundu go by,' yet none could tell me the place where the Dibundu had gone to. But the shark told me that the Dibundu had gone to your house. But the shark asked that I should give him a finger to eat. Yet when I begged him very much, he let me go."

Then the whale said to the girl : " I should like to marry you. Do you love me too? " But the girl answered him : " I pray you, let me first return to my father's and mother's house."

The whale answered : " Yes, to-morrow you shall return to your home." When the next day came, he sent men to lead the girl back to her home. But they did not go the usual way, which was shorter, but another one, because they did not wish that she should be seen by the crab. But the way that they went was very bad. Because of it they were three days on the road.

Then they came at last to this girl's home. But when the girl was seen by the parents they rejoiced very much, because they had thought already that their child was dead. But now, when they saw their child come with these men, they asked their child : " What men are these? Were you in their house? "

Then the child answered them : " Yes, a man sent these people. He wants to marry me. His name is ' Whale.' He said to me that he had sent the fish which I caught; he gave me the fish which had slipped from me. I should like to hear your answer if this man shall marry me."

But the parents replied to the girl : " We should not like this on any account, because the whale is too big. We do not want him for a son-in-law. Say to the people that he sent, to go and tell their master that we will not have it that he marries our daughter."

The men returned home and told their master, the whale : " This girl, whom you wanted to marry, did not get the consent from her parents." Then the whale got very angry.

He sent the same fish who had slipped from the girl the other time. But Dibundu also failed to bring about a marriage between the whale and the girl, because her parents did not consent. They never allowed her again to go fishing or hunting for crabs.

XIV. TWO CHILDREN.

A MAN had begotten two children. But this man was very poor. He had nothing more for them to eat, and said to his two children : " You are grown up. Each of you shall now go out in the world and look for work." He gave the elder son and also the younger one 20 loaves of bread. He gave them also meat for the journey on the quest of work.

But when they were on the way, the elder brother said to the younger one : " Hand your food out and let us eat of it first, because you are still very young and weak. The carrying might make you ill." Then the younger brother answered : " Yes ! "

Now they ate of the younger brother's provisions. But when they were eight days on the road, the bread and meat of the younger one were eaten up.

Now when the provisions of the younger one were quite eaten up, and they began to get hungry again, the younger one said to the elder one : " Give me food, because I am hungry ! " But the elder one answered him : " I shall not give you any of my food ! If you want some of my food you must give me one of your eyes for it. I will prick it, and thus blind it."¹ Then the younger one begged him and said : " Please, please give me, pray, a little of your food, I am so hungry."

But the elder one would not give him anything at all. Then the younger one said : " Blind my eye, then, if you

¹ The blinding of eyes was customary among the Duala, especially in former times. Now this cruelty can only be found still amongst some of the tribes of the interior.

will not have it otherwise." Then the elder one took a big nail from his pocket and pierced with it his brother's eye. After it he gave him very little bread and very little meat. The younger brother's pains were so great that he began to cry and said: "I and my brother, we came from home. The father had given each his loaves of bread, but my brother said to me that I should give him the loaves. Then we ate my loaves of bread first. When my bread would be finished we were to eat his. But now, when I had nothing left, he would not that I should eat of his. When I wanted food from him now, he blinded one of my eyes."

Now when the younger one had finished crying they went on. But after two days the younger one became hungry again, and said to the elder one: "Please, brother, give me a little bread." Then the elder one answered him: "I shall not give you any of my bread nor of my meat. If you want bread and meat from me, you must give me your other eye. I will blind it."

Then the younger one said again: "Yes!" Then his brother took also his other eye. But he did not wait any more for his brother now; he left him alone. He himself went to look for work. He found work too; he had to make tools.

But his blind brother, whom he had abandoned, lamented in his great pain. Two women passed by. When they saw the boy and heard him groan with pain, they asked him: "Child, why are you crying like this?" He answered them: "My father sent us two that we should go and look for work. He gave us also loaves of bread for the journey. But my brother helped me to eat all mine. But now, when mine was finished, I wanted to eat of his too, but he said that I should give him one of my eyes. He blinded one of my eyes. When I wanted again food from him, he pierced also my other eye. And then he abandoned me." Then the women said to him: "Do not lament any more about your eye. We will give you now a medicine. They dropped it into his eyes. Then he began again to groan in great pain, because the medicine was sharp and burned a great deal until the boy opened his eyes.

Then the women gave him again some of this medicine, and said to him: "Go to the house of the king! He is blind. Take this medicine and do to him as we have done to you. Drop some of it in his eyes, and he will also be able to see again."

On the way he saw his brother who had blinded his eyes. He was making tools. But when the younger one passed by, he did not say a word to him.

The boy came to the king's house and shouted on the steps, and said: "I want to see the master of this house." Then the guards said to him: "You are too small to be able to see our master." He said to them: "I am bringing your master something that is very good for him, and that will make him well." The guards answered: "Come up to the house!" When the boy wanted to pass by them, the guards caught hold of him and beat him till he dropped down. Then they threw him down.

When the wife of the king heard that a man wanted to come into the house to see the king, but that the guards beat him so, she came and said to the guards: "You must not beat this man on any account!" Then they let him go by.

When this man came into the house and saw the king, he saluted him. But the king did not see him, because he was blind. Then the young man said to him: "King, I come to your house because I hear that you are blind. But now I will put an end to your blindness."

The king was very astonished about this, because his blindness had already lasted 30 years. The young man said: "Tell your people that they spread mats out and put covers on them."

When the people had done this work, he dropped medicine into one of the king's eyes. Then the king rolled himself about the whole house in great pain. And the guards beat the young man a long time.

Now when the king opened his eye, he said: "Nobody shall be allowed to beat this man!" Now he dropped medicine into the king's other eye, and again the king rolled himself about the whole house. Then the guards struck the

man again. The king said : " Nobody shall beat this man, because he gave me my sight again. Now I can see as well as you. But I believe that you do not like to see it, because you have beaten this man."

Then the guards answered him : " Lord king, we did it because we thought that this man wanted to kill you." The king replied to them : " No, no; as you have beaten this man, you shall be killed."

He called other men and ordered them to : " Kill these eight guards ! " The other men killed these eight guards.

But the king gave the man, who had given him the medicine, two steamers, two steam launches, two houses with everything that belongs to their interior, thirty wardrobes, a beautiful chair. He gave him also his daughter as wife, and divided everything with him.

But to his daughter the king gave 940 marks, a house, two slaves, five wardrobes with clothes.

The king gave also men, who were to serve on the steamer. He accompanied him himself on another steamer as far as the sea. Then he said to him : " If you should like anything more from me, let me know. You shall get it from me." Then the king turned back with his ship.

But now, when the steamer was sailing, the younger brother saw the elder one, who had blinded him on the way. He had to work very hard, and was clothed with a sack. The younger brother sailed home to his father.